Underground Film Journal

Kenneth Anger

Kenneth Anger is one of the premiere figures of the American underground film movement. Born in Santa Monica, California, Anger began making avant-garde films as a teenager in the 1940s and continues to do so to this day.

His most famous film is *Scorpio Rising* (1963), an experimental documentary/narrative hybrid featuring a Brooklyn-based biker gang that he met in New York while living with Marie Menken and Willard Maas. His earlier film, *Fireworks* (1947) is considered a pioneering work of homoerotic filmmaking.

In addition to his filmmaking, Anger founded and ran with fellow avant-garde filmmaker Curtis Harrington a short-lived screening society and distribution organization in Los Angeles in the '40s.

Anger is also probably most famously known as the author of the hugely successful gossip book *Hollywood Babylon*.

Much of the below filmography was constructed out of the Underground Film Timeline, where you can find out more about Anger and his place in underground film history. Since Anger has been known to continually revise and re-edit — and sometimes abandon — his films, many of the films listed below have multiple dates.

Many of his earliest films have been restored and released on *The Complete Magick Lantern Cycle* DVD set.

Watch Streaming Films By Kenneth Anger:

- Scorpio Rising

Filmography

Uniform Attraction (2009)
Death (2009)
Brush of Baphomet (2009)
Ich Will! (2008)
My Surfing Lucifer (2008)
Foreplay (2008)
Elliott's Suicide (2007)
I'll Be Watching You (2007)
Mouse Heaven (2005)
The Man We Want to Hang (2002)
Lucifer Rising (1966-67, 1980)
Rabbit's Moon (1950, 1979)
Invocation of My Demon Brother (1969)
KKK (Kustom Kar Kommandos) (1965)
Anger Aquarian Arcanum (1965)

Scorpio Rising (1963)
Histoire d'O (1959-61)
Thelema Abbey (1955)
Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome (1954, 1958, 1966)
Eaux d'Artifice (1953)
Maldoror (unfinished) (1951-52)
La Jeune Homme et La Mort (1951 or 1953)
La Lune des Lapins (unfinished) (1950)
Puce Moment (1949)
The Love That Whirls (unfinished) (1948)
Fireworks (1947)
Escape Episode (sound) (1946)
Drastic Demise (1945)
Escape Episode (silent) (1944)
The Nest (1943)
Prisoner of Mars (1942)
Tinsel Tree (1942)
Who Has Been Rocking My Dream Boat (1941)

Articles:

Underground Cinema 12: January-May 1971
March 2, 2019

Underground Cinema 12 was a midnight movie screening series of underground films that ran in theaters owned by Louis Sher, who founded "the nation's largest circuit of art houses" in 1954. While Sher was the head of the Art Theatre Guild, Underground Cinema 12 was run by his nephew Mike Getz. The series began at […]

Read full article...
1965-66: The Scorpio Rising Parody Mystery
October 7, 2018

A genuine underground mystery has appeared! The above movie ad appeared in the January 1, 1966 San Francisco Examiner; and was posted on Twitter by Evan. It announces the "World Premiere" of the film Cycle Queen, which is billed as a satire on Kenneth Anger's classic film Scorpio Rising (1963). No filmmaker is listed in the ad.

Read full article...
1962: Underground Roommates: Anger, Maas And Menken
September 23, 2018

In 1962, Kenneth Anger moved to Brooklyn, New York and began living with married filmmakers Willard Maas and Marie Menken. Once in Brooklyn, however, Anger became acquainted with a local motorcycle gang and shot footage that would eventually become his most celebrated work.

Read full article...

Robert Beck Memorial Cinema: January — May Screenings, 1999
June 17, 2018

Continuing into 1999 at the Collective Unconscious theater space in NYC, the RBMC — co-programmed by Brian L. Frye and Bradley Eros — went on hiatus for the first week of the year, but resumed on January 12. Below is a list of screenings from then until a May 18 event that celebrated the RBMC's first full year of existence.

Read full article...

Anthology Film Archives: The First Screenings, 1970
June 2, 2018

After years of planning, the Anthology Film Archives first opened its doors in New York City towards the end of 1970. That opening came with great interest and fascination of how the world's first "museum of film" was going to operate like no other theater before it.

Read full article...

Kenneth Anger: 1966 Screening Of His "Magick Lantern Cycle"
March 4, 2018

According to the modern day Magic Lantern Society, Danish mathematician Thomas Rasmussen Walgensten was the first person to use the term "Laterna Magica" in the mid-1600s to describe his image projection device.

Read full article...

Robert Beck Memorial Cinema: 1998 Screenings
February 4, 2018

Brian L. Frye programmed the first screening on May 12, 1998 at the Collective Unconscious theater space. The screening included the feature-length documentary Underground by Emile de Antonio about the left-wing militant group the Weather Underground

Read full article...

Experimental Film Coalition: The Monthly Screenings
December 17, 2017

This is Part Two in a series about Chicago's Experimental Film Coalition; and covers their screening series. Formed in 1983, the Experimental Film Coalition started holding regular monthly screenings starting in 1984. The screenings brought to Chicago the work of independent, experimental filmmakers across the country, as well as screening local work.

Read full article...

EXPRMNTL 3: 1963 Recap

October 1, 2017

1963 was a pivotal year in the history of avant-garde film in the United States. In Visionary Film, P. Adams Sitney calls it “the high point of the mythopoeic development within the American avant-garde.”

Read full article...

Boston Film-Makers’ Cinematheque 1966-67: The Posters
August 6, 2017

In 1966, as the underground film wave was sweeping the country, a Boston off-shoot of New York City’s Film-Makers’ Cinematheque opened at a performance space at 53 Berkeley Street. Underground films were shown on weeknights, while on the weekends the space transformed into a music venue called The Boston Tea Party.

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